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commonweal

NO NEWS IS BAD NEWS

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NEWS & VIEWS

Unselling the War

The latest campaign of the anti-war movement to counter the business of Vietnam is perhaps the most novel of all: a radio and TV advertising effort labeled "Unsell the War."

It all began when a Yale student named Ira Nerkin saw the CBS TV documentary, "The Selling of the Pentagon," and figured that the anti-war movement might be able to do something along the same line itself.

Friends in the advertising industry devised ads, and Clergy and Laity Concerned was approached to take over sponsorship. It was agreed, and a network of committees was organized around the country to secure free, public-service spots on the air.

Now Clergy and Laity Concerned has moved up to paid time, and this fall is planning the first of some heavy Unsell campaigns. It is purchasing $45,000 of prime-time in Chicago and Washington, and will spread out into eight other wide-coverage areas, as its advertising budget grows.

Clergy and Laity Concerned would like to raise $185,000 to buy TV and radio time, according to Linda Block, who heads up Unsell the War in New York. (The national coordinator is Frank Greer in San Francisco.) It has $59,000 toward the goal.

The vehicles for the Unsell the War messages are 30-and 60-second spots featuring top talent. The talent is all donated and, by Block's estimate, represents over $2 million—"the largest single contribution to the peace movement." (Linda Block adds in the waived fees of creative teams, script writers, sound and stage effects people, etc., as well as those whose voice and image are projected on radio and TV.)

Among those cooperating in the campaign is Henry Fonda, whose principal Vietnam involvement used to be in lamenting the activities of daughter Jane. He makes his first public statement against the war in the Unsell campaign. Henry Fonda appears on screen saying:

"When I was a kid, I used to be really proud of this country. I thought that this was a country that cared about people no matter who they were or where they came from. But now, when I see my country engaged in an endless war, a push-button war in which American pilots and electronic technicians are killing thousands of Asians without even seeing who they kill. . . .

"When I see us each week stepping up the tonnage of bombs dropped on Indochina . . . then I don't feel so proud any more. Because I thought that was what bad countries did . . . not my country."

A first batch of Unsell ads emphasized the land war in South Vietnam, and the resulting American casualties. The Nixon Administration's shift to massive technological warfare prompted a second series focusing on the genocidal and immoral nature of the new strategy. A typical spot has Canadian actress Montey Margetts describing an anti-personnel weapon:

"The mother bomb releases baby bombs, which explode and scatter the pellets over an area the size of ten football fields . . . with enough force to puncture the head, or chest, or stomach of a North Vietnamese soldier, or a water buffalo . . . or a baby."

The ads are not very pretty; on the other hand, neither is the war. And think twice before predicting that they're going to turn off more people than they'll persuade. A committee in Louisville bought time recently for Unsell ads, and followed these up with a mail appeal asking quarters to defray expenses. It got back double the cost of the time.

McLaughlin Anew

Mr. Nixon's Jesuit, Father John McLaughin, is getting a rough time, as he lugs the President's banner around the country.

"It's hard to believe so few women and children are being burned and bombed," said a student at the College of St. Thomas in St. Paul, after McLaughlin had maintained that B-52 bomb-target areas are cleared "scrupulously and assiduously."

"I really can't believe what you've said," the student added.

Another—William Reed—was more emphatic. "Everything you've said is a complete lie," Reed, a Vietnam vet, told McLaughlin.

Reed's remark could not be lightly dismissed. For a time he was a bodyguard for Gen. Creighton Abrams, and served also with a convoy unit transporting enemy war prisoners from July, 1970, to July, 1971.

He drew on the latter experience in challenging McLaughlin.

"We packed them (enemy war prisoners) in trailers, 200 to 300 at a time, and locked the door and hauled them for three to four days without food or water," said Reed. "Father, don't get up there to tell me what's right or wrong."

Among the contentions by McLaughlin: that there has been virtually no adverse environmental impact on South Vietnamese farmland because of farming raids. "The reality is that you can overfly South Vietnam and look in vain over the huge majority of the land surface for any sign of the war," he contended.

The comment came almost on the eve of the accusation that the United States had dropped insect larvae over the South Vietnamese province of Quangngai, an area long controlled by Communist forces, to destroy rice and other crops. The accusation was made by Hanoi, which, of course, does not make the accusation fact. But Hanoi many times in the past has been the first to reveal evil policies later acknowledged by the U.S.

An Appeal

Secours Catholique Paris and the Vietnamese Catholic Mission in France have issued the following joint appeal:

"The civilian population of Vietnam from Saigon to Hanoi bears the sorrowful burden of a long war which for weeks has redoubled its intensity and inhumanity.

"Thousands of refugees, thousands of women and children, victims of bombardments and the fighting are in greater need of help than ever.

"Our two organizations make this appeal for all the victims in Vietnam, North and South, regardless of race, religion or ideology.

"Gifts should be sent to Secours Catholique, 106 Rue de Bac, Paris 7, or to Mission Catholique Vietnamienne, 15 Rue Boissonade, Paris 14, France.

"Secours Catholique will be in charge of distributing on both sides of the 17th parallel whatever is donated. This appeal is solely, and wishes to be only, a contribution to peace."

Odds and Ends

—President Nixon, a man intensely preoccupied with Nixon records, doesn't cite (not surprisingly) the perhaps two most remarkable records of his Administration: (1) he's upped the federal debt 25 percent since 1968 (to $434.5 billion; projected debt at end of F.Y. '73: $459.5 billion); (2) in the first nine months of 1972 he topped the tonnage of bombs dropped on Vietnam for all of 1972. In the last 7 years, U.S. planes have now unloaded on Vietnam three-and-a-half times more tons of explosives than used during all of World War II in all the war theaters by all the Allies! JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Tate & Slavery

Binghamton, N. Y.

To the Editors: Thomas Heffernan's "Tactile Politics" [Aug. 11] is a timely examination of the socio-political ideas of Allen Tate and the Agrarians, men whose literary concepts still more or less dominate academic English Departments. However, I was surprised that Mr. Heffernan not once looked into an aspect of Tate's thought which is especially a source of controversy—I refer to the fact that Tate, implicitly and at times explicitly, seems to have been in favor of slavery as a system. For example, in "What is Traditional Society?" he praised ante-bellum man because the latter "achieved a unity between his moral life and his livelihood . . . he dominated the means of life." Those "means of life" which ante-bellum man dominated were, of course, nothing less than the Black bond-slaves.

With ideas like this floating around in Tate's writings, I was disappointed to find no mention of the word "slavery" in Mr. Heffernan's otherwise excellent article.

GENE BELL

Novak and Busing

Amery, Ms.

To the Editors: The flitterings of Michael Novak amongst the latest movements leaves me a bit startled. Does "Busing Won't Always Work" [Sept. 22] indicate a waffling on your part as well?

Mr. Novak needs to reexamine some of his assertions: "Busing does not integrate lower-middle-income whites with the children of educated, professional blacks. . . . Rather, it integrates lower-status whites . . . with blacks still more disadvantaged than they."

Perhaps, *Commonweal* would have better headed Novak's column "Novak's

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VANISHING AID

Foreign aid never had a huge constituency, people who would bombard Senators and Representatives with telegrams and letters and in general kick and scream until they got what they wanted. Now it has almost no constituency at all, as fear of more involvements like that in Vietnam has frightened many former supporters away. The result of this shift in public support was clearly reflected in the shape of the foreign aid measure recently approved by the House Appropriations Committee and then by the House of Representatives itself.

The major preliminary work of the Appropriations Committee, of course, was to slash the foreign aid proposal, passing a measure that calls for the expenditure of $4.2 billion—almost $1 billion less than the Administration requested. This was drastic enough, but it gets even worse when one looks at the details. First of all, the lion's share of the appropriation voted is for military aid in one form or another; economic assistance remains the poor cousin. Referring to what is called this nation's "critical financial situation," the House group cut $215 million out of the already low figure proposed for economic assistance in the form of grants and low-interest loans. The never-large Alliance for Progress technical assistance program was cut by $11 million, funds for development loans in the same program were cut by $40 million, and another cut of $20 million was made in the requests for various assistance programs of United Nations agencies. In short, economic aid bore the brunt of the near-$1 billion cut, with direct and indirect military aid being trimmed very little. And the Committee and the House approved, of course, $450 million to sell United States arms abroad—on credit yet. Completely disallowed, though, was $100 million badly needed for the Asian Development Bank, and the sum needed for the Inter-American Development Bank was literally cut in half. All things considered, perhaps Bangladesh did not do too badly; aid funds for that hard-hit country were cut only by 25 percent.

So it goes, and the startling thing to remember is that despite its cuts the present House action might be considered an improvement over last year's aid disaster. All this took place, it should be noted, in the same week in which the World Bank announced that despite impressive gains, "it is probably true that the world's burden of poverty is increasing rather

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than declining." While the United States pleads poverty, the rich nations in fact get richer and the poor nations get poorer. Obscured by the technical language and the statistics of legislative proposals is the face of poverty, of children withering of malnutrition, of mothers dying in childbirth for lack of care, of whole populations which never have quite enough to eat. As conservatives love to point out, this nation by itself cannot halt the grim march of poverty, disease and illiteracy in the underdeveloped nations, but it is equally true that outside economic aid from the rich areas of the world is an essential factor in their growth. Not long ago the sum of one percent of the nation's Gross Product was the target in foreign aid. Now, being realistic, we suppose, the United Nations has lowered its sights and the suggested target is set at .7 of one percent of the GNP. To our shame it must be recorded that the richest nation in the world is presently allotting for foreign aid less than one-half of the lower suggested amount.

In the long run a basic change in our approach to foreign aid is necessary, which is why we are ambivalent on the present bill. Military aid and economic aid should be kept firmly separate, and neither kind of aid should ever be used as a means of forcing weaker nations to do our will. As far as possible, all aid should be channeled through international agencies. But this is for the future. At this moment there is no hope that Congress will have the time or the moral energy to engage in a thoroughgoing reform of our whole approach to aid—nor is there any hope in the present political climate that Congress would provide aid on the scale that would be proportionate to the need. On balance, then, the best thing that can probably be done is for the Senate to carry out as much therapeutic surgery on the House bill as possible, trimming and adding liberally. Many features in the measure are not at all to our liking, but the economic assistance features are vital and should be saved. It is in our national self-interest to build a peaceful world, but even if it were not, the United States would still have an inescapable moral responsibility toward the underdeveloped nations. Disillusion with our tragic national course in Vietnam should not be used as an excuse for abdication of this grave moral responsibility.

SAVING CULTURE

The plethora of stories in the press recently about Italy's decaying cultural environment—the Colosseum coming apart, the Forum teetering, Venice sinking further into the sea—make tragic reading for all who consider Italy as part of a universal heritage that civilization cannot afford to lose. And the impulse from a distance such as America is to wring hands, then go about one's business. But yet there are steps that can be taken even from afar to help preserve the environment of Italy.

Support of funds for public education, dissemination of information, encouragement of legislative action and, when possible, outright purchase of threatened antiquities by foundations and conservation groups are obvious ways of helping. To this, Arcadi Nebolsine of the Italian Art and Landscape Foundation's executive board adds two praiseworthy suggestions, both of which carry concern about our cultural heritage through Italy and beyond. He proposes that American businesses should invest in the economic development of nations only on condition that proper environmental and cultural safeguards are guaranteed. He also asks that U.S. universities that complain about overproduction and overkill of specialists, together with obfuscation of aims and values, channel more of their energies in environmental directions, and as stewards of culture become particularly concerned about the protection and maintenance of the cultural environment.

A few institutions, such as the University of Pittsburgh, have programs of this sort, but many, many more are needed if any impact is going to be made on the problems.

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Uganda's Asians: Half a Welcome

The saga of the Uganda Asians and their probable entry into Britain, which has preoccupied the media and the pubs even to the exclusion of the Irish question at times, illustrates very neatly the way Britain behaves. First of all, there was a gigantic muddle, as the first news of Amin's order came through. There was no clear idea in anybody's mind—not in Amin's (if you can call that devious piece of machinery a mind), not in the British government's, not even in the minds of independent observers—of the scale of the problem. But it now seems clear that everybody exaggerated the numbers involved, and especially the numbers likely to come to Britain. Because of the exaggeration, there was panic: a natural result of the initial muddle. Inevitably, the first people to profit from the panic were Enoch Powell and the lunatic fringe on the Right, who immediately began to argue that Britain had no responsibility for the refugees, that the issue of British passports conferred no special rights on their holders, that the 50,000 who were going to come were merely the tip of an iceberg, of which the invisible base consisted of millions upon millions of other passport-holders who would be arriving in their wake. Not surprisingly, Powell's old friends in the working class, the Smithfield meat porters or rather, a small but vociferous minority of them—focused their attention on this

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new issue, and marched, together with native supporters of the National Front (formerly the Mosleyites) in protest against the dreaded influx.

Given the present difficulty in believing the government when it talks about making every effort to reduce unemployment while keeping on with the Industrial Relations Act, it was not surprising that bland assurances that the Asians would not be coming to take jobs away from people already here, were not taken too seriously. But if the government's assurances, plus its insistence that both international law and ordinary decency compelled Britain to accept its share of the refugees, were less than convincing to many people, the silence of the Labor Party leadership on the issue was surely more scandalous. It was thus left to voluntary organizations and ad hoc bodies to face the real problems that were involved.

Meanwhile, of course, the panic began to subside as the true numbers of likely refugees became known, and the original estimates were shown to be absurdly exaggerated. But more important, I think, in changing the mood has been the subsequent behavior of Amin himself in Uganda. As he moved from a policy of simply expelling an awkward minority, and claiming to be working in the interests of Africanization, towards an openly racialist, and manifestly irrational policy of positive cruelty towards anyone who got in his way, the British sense of fair play reasserted itself. As Amin continues to behave more and more like a Black Hitler, Britain moves towards compassion. Incidents like the kidnapping (and possible murder) of the Ugandan chief justice by Amin's Gestapo, and—more importantly for British susceptibilities—the temporary imprisonment of British journalists in one of Amin's prison-cum-murder camps, have probably changed the attitude of the average British citizen to one of sympathy; qualified of course by suspicion of any "foreigners," especially colored ones. So in the last few days we have heard practically nothing of the voices that were calling a few weeks back for open resistance to the Asian hordes. Powell has not made a big speech about them lately: all that has happened is that Geoffrey Rippon, Britain's Common Market negotiator who, as a Foreign Office man couldn't avoid getting involved in the government's policy of accepting our moral and legal responsibilities has been expelled from the Monday Club. (The Monday Club is a right-wing anti-immigrant Conservative group which has urged the Party to refuse the Asians as far as possible. Rippon was a member until quite recently, though never a very publicity-conscious one.)

So the situation as I write is that the Asians are now beginning to arrive at the airports in some hundreds, and the trickle will turn to a steady flow in the next few weeks. The stories many of the early arrivals have told over the television, of being robbed and threatened by Amin's army thugs on the way to Entebbe, have helped to arouse the sympathies of the ordinary man, so the result is that now a steady stream of help is forthcoming to the various local agencies throughout the country which have the practical task of coping with the arrivals and their problems. Firms are beginning to offer jobs and people are beginning to look around their houses to see if they have any room to spare for temporary accommodation.

Despite the vociferous anti-immigrant stand of certain well-known Catholic MPs, Catholics seem to have been to the fore in trying to see that decency prevailed. Bishop Cleary of Wolverhampton, who has long been in the forefront of racial-harmony work, despite the problem of having Powell's constituency in his own backyard—perhaps it has been an asset rather than a liability to him—has now been joined by Archbishop Dwyer as the champion of Catholics' duties towards the colored immigrants. We had a kind of mini-pastoral letter on the subject here in Birmingham last Sunday which, like the Archbishop's Pastoral on Rhodesia some months ago, should do much good in creating the right psychological environment for relations between the predominantly Irish Catholic community and the colored minorities. For of course the Irish, as sometime immigrants themselves, are liable to be more hostile than the well-established English to anyone who seems to threaten their own position. (Powell of course wants the Irish to be treated as aliens rather than as friends from just across the water. The current behavior of the Provisionals in Belfast and Derry is, naturally, helping him to gain support for such a view, but it doesn't look like getting very far.)

All in all, then, it seems as if the Ugandan Asians will experience a reasonably tolerant and sympathetic welcome, at least at the beginning. But they have had to endure Amin's special brand of vicious lunacy in order to ensure that sympathy. If Amin had been less vile, the British would have been less decent. "So it goes," to quote another pilgrim, survivor of another slaughterhouse.

BRIAN WICKER

(Brian Wicker is Commonweal's *correspondent in Great Britain.)*

COMING

EUGENE FONTINELL writes on the subject of marriage, morality and the Church:

"It is my judgment that Catholics in the past tied up marital morality with contraceptive morality. It is because Pope Paul cannot see how he can surrender the traditional view on contraception without jeopardizing the traditional view on marriage and the authority of the Church in morality that he remains wedded to a position that has long since been lost."

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NO NEWS IS BAD NEWS

WES BARTHELMES

A relationship of mutual suspicion is normal

The two major Presidential candidates and the press are wrangling this fall over the spoils of free publicity and free news. All the horrors of modern publicity are attendant upon this campaign. However, there's a difference, compared with past Presidential campaigns, because Democrats are as grumpy as Republicans over the coverage. The traditional response of news-editors to criticism in such a situation is: "It's proof we must be doing something right—everyone's mad at us." This glib rationalization for inadequate performance is unacceptable.

Admittedly, this is a difficult time for the press, including television and radio. They're confronted with a venomous Presidential Administration and a Supreme Court decision unfriendly to investigative reporting, scarce as it is. Not that the pattern is unfamiliar.

Presidents and press have periodically existed in a relationship of mutual suspicion. An occasional editor has been clapped into jail. Recent Democratic Presidents have snarled at press people. Recent Democratic Presidents have made midnight telephone calls to the publisher of the *Washington Post* to complain about first-edition stories. Recent Democratic Presidents have been known to have requested transfer of "unfriendly" reporters assigned to the White House. But the actions of the Nixon Administration differ both in degree and kind in the course of its persistent efforts to subdue press people.

The Buchanan-Whitehead-Colson-Ehrlichman quartet, white-collar bullies of the Nixon staff, have set out to intimidate those newspapers and those television stations that express other than the supportive views of the *San Diego Union* and columnist Nick Thimmesch. A Nixon assistant has appeared at the *New York Times* building to congratulate union printers who refused to set a paid anti-war advertisement urging impeachment of President Nixon. Presidential Assistants Buchanan and Whitehead have made the Nixon Administration's hostility even more explicit in respect to television networks, particularly CBS, NBC and the Public Broadcasting Corporation. The Nixon Administration is not even mollified by the hanging-curves Howard Smith serves up on ABC commentaries.

"My primary concern," Buchanan recently told an interviewer," is that the President have the right of *untrammeled* communication with the American people . . . , the idea of the press playing the role of the loyal opposition is a lot of malarkey."

Television news-coverage particularly interests Buchanan. "You're going to find something done in the area of anti-trust action," he has threatened if the network news-programs don't perform in a manner pleasing to Richard Nixon. The Federal Communications Commission does not license networks, but it does issue licenses to individual TV stations, such as the five each of the major three networks is permitted to own. One may fairly conclude that the government-controlled French national television is the notorious ideal of the Nixon Presidency.

There's a second shadow over the press. In June, the Supreme Court decided, in effect, that Earl Caldwell of the *New York Times* and other reporters have no Constitutional protection when they refuse to expose their sources of news to inquiring grand juries. The Burger Court was divided in its opinion. Mr. Justice

WES BARTHELMES, *formerly of the* Worcester Telegram *and the* Washington Post, *is a Washington-based writer.*

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Stewart, dissenting, protested that the majority opinion evidenced "a disturbing insensitivity to the critical role of an independent press in our society." The *Columbia Journalism Review* noted that concurring with the majority in these cases was Mr. Justice Rehnquist "nonchalantly voting on a case he had helped manage while in the Department of Justice."

Consequently, one should be moved to be protective of the press during the Nixon/Kissinger years, but, nevertheless, one cannot remain unaware of the press's own inept acts. The current Presidential campaign is a handy example.

Ephemeral Repentance

It is not unknown for newspapers and television to acknowledge their deficiencies and to make avowals of reform. But the urge to self-improvement subsides quickly—like New Year's resolutions. The press has a history of ephemeral repentances. Occasionally, there's a jocular acknowledgment by the press of its wretched performance during the 1948 Truman-Dewey campaign. As social disasters accumulated during the 1960s, we heard and read similar avowals of remedial intentions. The press repented its miserable performance during the 1968 campaign, and again in 1970. Late in 1971, David Broder of the *Washington Post,* one of the good ones, did note that "it may be well to remind ourselves how little we are able to anticipate the turns and twists of our national life." In contrast, Robert Novak continues to utter his simplistic noises. As the saying goes around Washington, if the Novak syndicated column were a mouthwash, even the Federal Trade Commission might not let it be marketed.

Actually, most national political correspondents are capable and intelligent men and women—frequently, more so than candidates and office-holders they cover. But the products of the press are less than the sum of their parts.

Depending on one's temperament, one may laugh or cry at the current campaign coverage's grotesqueries. A year prior to the party convention, Senator Muskie was declared by most people as certain to be the Democratic nominee. However, when he failed to win the New Hampshire primary last March by what reporters considered an acceptable margin, they began to rag and bully and disclaim him. For a while, Senator Jackson was pushed forward as the candidate of "the real majority," a political consensus merchandised by Richard Scammon and Ben Wattenberg. A housewife, married to a machinist in Dayton, Ohio, was said to be the original prototype of this majority. She was dethroned in the 1970 Congressional election to be replaced by Archie Bunker. Carroll O'Connor, who plays the role of Bunker in the TV serial, was last seen campaigning for McGovern.

Then, there is the compulsive publication of public-opinion polls, so-called, that are offered as "news." These polls do not even merit Malraux's defense—like medicine, less scientific than they claim; more scientific than any alternative. Inevitably, the public opinion polls published in August become, in prospective voters' eyes, predictive of votes cast on Election Day three months later. Robert Sherrill has the definitive description: polls are a sort of fun barometer of how Milwaukee changes its mind after three beers. Yet, the polling results of Harris and Gallup regularly are assigned prominent place in the newspapers. Apparently without benefit of polls, Eric Sevareid on the evening news on September 18th (again) virtually elected Nixon to a second term; in its September 25th issue, *Newsweek* (again) offered as serious fare Jimmy-the-Greek's Nevada odds favoring Nixon as the election winner. Fortunately, voters have shown they often rely on their own interior representations of the world and are not guided by Gallup, Harris and the fleshpot odds from Nevada.

Repeatedly, the American electorate is being informed, in effect, that George McGovern can't win, because the polls, Joe Alsop and Novak won't let him. Someone needs to remind Americans that, after all, there will be an election in November.

Consequential news-events are being demeaned. The electronic surveillance of Democratic National Party headquarters by Republican campaign committee employees is an example. Press people cutely referred to it as a "caper," as if it were a prank of Alec Guinness' Lavender Hill Mob. Network television has not even begun to treat this scandal with any precision or depth.

There is no scarcity of reporting, however, about the "politics of politics." Is Mayor Daley sulking? Is John Connally to go honest and become a de jure Republican? There's relatively little news published about meaningful legislative politics, for example, of economic issues, except as written by a few persistent, disciplined reporters such as Morton Mintz of the *Washington Post*. The herd instinct continues to prevail, as reporters, to avoid being "scooped," interview each other. Reporters, like generals, also are fighting the last campaign over again—not the current one. Then there's the daily quota of "ripple-watching"—marginal accounts, for example, of whether McGovern's campaign staff is feuding internally. The news is further skewered because of the practice of numerous reporters to collect "news-sources" as lawyers collect clients.

Obsessively repetitive coverage . . . trivialization . . . cronyism . . . herd instinct . . . fadism . . . unintended ironies of Woodrow Wilson's definition of news as "the atmosphere of events."

The character and temperament of George McGovern elude the press. Such candidates as McGovern often find it difficult to talk with press people. They just never develop the hang of it. They distrust clichés and the

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headline phrasing does not come easily. Because of time-pressures, even highly capable press people solicit clichés. On duty, these press people are impatient in the company of tentative or elaborated conversation. Consequently, although most press people are unfavorably disposed toward a Nixon or a Humphrey, each is a supreme cliché, although distinct, and, therefore, each satisfies the press people's insistent format. In contrast, McGovern is not a cliché. He is difficult to pigeonhole and is promptly labeled "uncertain" or "unsure of himself." In a transitional time, wherein legislative proposals of Democratic custodial liberals are not working, it is difficult for a representative of a different breed of Democratic Presidential candidate, such as McGovern, to describe new turnings. As a result, McGovern is not being adequately covered. For three decades, most press people have "liked" Democratic Presidential nominees. They maintained journalistic "love-affairs" with them—and some not so journalistic. Since FDR, this has made for good reading for Democrats, understandably has angered Republicans, but adds to poor newspapering, in any event. This year, press people obviously have no favorite and the campaign coverage reflects this.

Much Too Much

What is to be done? One is tempted to suggest there's too much newsprint available. Column upon column of overwritten material, mostly non-news or secondary, is published daily. One is inundated. One reads appreciatively the succinct political appraisals, not necessarily accurate but, at least, manageable for readers, that appear in the "American Survey" section of the *Economist* of London, or in the weekly editions of *Le Monde* or the *Guardian* of Manchester. Writings reflecting deeper understanding than those contained in any 10-pound Sunday edition of the *New York Times*. Ralph McGill had a description for the morass of matter confronting readers—"wood-pulp pablum."

Capable press people themselves are aware of the blighted condition. Tom Wicker of the *New York Times* understands: "We too often cover politicians rather than voters." Mary McGrory of the *Washington Evening Star* understands: "We talk endlessly among ourselves. . . . We peddle little notions and see if the other person seems to accept it; then we write it and they write it a week later." Martin Nolan of the *Boston Globe* understands: "this addition to prediction—the idea that it is more important to tell the reader which candidate is going to win than what he stands for." Richard Strout of the *Christian Science Monitor* understands: ". . . maybe the time has arrived when the news-media should set up machinery (British Press Council-Editor's note) to police themselves."

The American press is a privileged institution with Constitutional protections. Correctly so. It has, however, a noncomitant obligation to make known to voters the facts about where the centers of power are located, for example, or how our laws are really made. Of course, there is no such animal as unadulterated information. One asks not for objectivity, simply fairness. The argument is not that, at present, the press makes and breaks a particular candidate. No such thing. It means worse —it terribly confuses viewers and readers. One hopes for a permanent apparatus for criticism, located outside the press and staffed by an A. J. Liebling, a Robert Lasch, a Don Hollenbeck, even a strident George Seldes.

The press does not lack skilled practitioners, aware of deficiencies and able to induce remedies. But the *institutional* response is unsatisfactory to date. We receive either the smelly orthodoxies of *Editor & Publisher* magazine or maledictions of Mr. Nixon's staff. One imagines hearing the opening bars of Dies Irae.

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ROBERT JOE STOUT

THE END OF THE ESTABLISHMENT

He walked along the river throwing
  stones at fish, stepped
through tenements of smoke, through rings
  of bloat and bodies stripped
for burning . . . this he wrote, growing
with the words, the facts, owing

  Thanks only to eyes kept
simple by the need to show, thing
  in itself, the world in tepid
glory, this his poetry, his life:
  kids and Ph.D.
('meal ticket' isn't it?) showing

  . . . what? World kept
in circles by the vicious swing
of truth. tr/
                u
                 t
      h
        Sing
  it as you will, he's tripped
and fallen, bundled now in glowing
  Buds. What need

Have they, these new, of words? :bro
                wn
                        in
                    g
in their bellies, rimbaud in
  their hair, they make parade
and resurrect the dead. O Sing
  of pound and fetishes. . . .
shelley, shelley rides again!

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SOAKING THE POOR

MICHAEL HARRINGTON

We should consider relying upon a really progressive federal income tax as the sole source of public funds for all purposes

The American tax system is increasingly an instrument for the redistribution of wealth from the poor and the working people to the rich. Its basic priorities must therefore be reversed. In the immediate future that could, and should, mean that $77 billion now allocated by the government to the affluent minority will be put to the service of the majority.

I believe that federal fiscal policy should be a decisive means for promoting, not simply the quantitative levels of full employment, but the quality and shape of the national product as well. The tax system is not suited to be the primary means for promoting those ends but it has an extremely important role to play in the achievement of full, meaningful employment (which could be roughly defined as exactly opposite to what is being done today). One crucial way of asserting social priorities in the Internal Revenue Code is to repeal *all* the subsidy provisions it now contains. These mainly favor the wealthy and, as Joseph Pechman and Benjamin Okner pointed out to the Joint Economic Committee, their abolition would free $77 billion of government income which could then be devoted to the common good rather than, as now, to special interests. I also think we should consider doing away with all other taxes, federal, state and local, and to rely upon a really progressive federal income tax as the sole source of public funds for all purposes.

We are in a new period in which there is no question of *whether* the government is going to determine, in broad measure, the distribution of wealth, but only as *how* it is going to do so. Therefore it is wrong to counterpose "radical" redistributions on the Left to those who humbly submit to the free market distribution of income on the Center and Right. President Nixon is as radical a wealth redistributor as I am (and much more of a radical than that reasonable moderate, George McGovern). Mr. Nixon and I do not disagree on principle. He favors policies which redistribute wealth to the rich whereas I think that the government should channel resources to that majority whose basic, and crying, needs are far from satisfied.

MICHAEL HARRINGTON *is the author of* The Invisible Poor, The New Democratic Left, *and, most recently,* Socialism. *The above article was based on testimony presented to the Joint Economic Committee.*

To make my point perfectly clear, let me turn for a moment to fundamentals.

In the current orthodoxy, pre-tax income is taken as a given, established by the play of a free market. To determine the distributive effect of the tax system, you then compute the effective rate for various income classes, subtract subsidies and transfer payments which the groups receive, and figure out the value of the public services which accrue to each category. Given this methodology, one discovers that the American tax system is moderately progressive and requires, at most, only an end to some of the most discriminatory features of the Revenue Code. The guiding assumption is that the economic substratum, the free market, is basically sound and, though it contains obvious inequities in income, is the best mechanism for guaranteeing that economic growth which will benefit all citizens.

Thus, that invaluable Populist Senator Fred Harris, said, in the course of commenting on monopoly prices, "Now, I think it is highly important that this subsidy be eliminated by moving forward to the free enterprise system. Some people say we want to move back to the free enterprise system. I don't think that it is the right way to phrase the problem. I want to move forward to the free enterprise system and I think that bringing competition to the market is a better planning mechanism than anything else we can devise." And the Joint Economic Committee's own staff study argued that the issue is one of correcting "defects" in the market system which is seen as an efficient, and just, distributor of wealth.

I think that the orthodox assumptions underlying these statements ignore a basic structural change in American society—and in the duties of the American government. In saying this I speak, of course, as a democratic socialist. But it is important to emphasize that on this particular count it is not in the least necessary to agree with my political philosophy in order to accept my specific analysis. My argument, I believe, makes sense within a liberal, as well as a socialist, framework.

Pre-tax income is not a given. It is a social, and increasingly a governmental, product. Ever since the Employment Act of 1946, Washington has been legally charged with the maintenance of a full-employment economy. In 1961, with the triumph of the "New Economics" under President Kennedy, the Employment

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Act, which had been honored in the breach under President Eisenhower at an unconscionable cost in chronic unemployment, became the effective law of the land. This remained true under President Johnson, who successfully built on the foundations laid by Kennedy, and even under President Nixon. If Mr. Nixon's initial game plan—budget-balancing and tight money in an effort to trade off some unemployment in return for price stability—was a disaster, it nevertheless demonstrated that the federal government is the most decisive single factor in the economy.

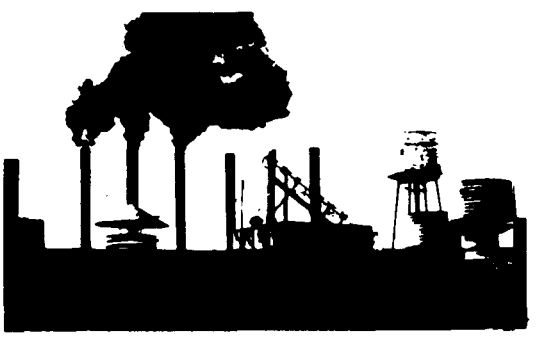
This is not simply a quantitative fact according to which federal outlays are a crucial aggregate. It also relates to the very character of the national product. The decision made by President Kennedy to stimulate the economy by investment incentives rather than, say, through a massive middle- and low-cost housing program, had a profound—and negative—impact upon the way in which our resources were allocated. Mr. Kennedy probably acted as he did because of his precarious political position in the Congress in 1961 and 1962. In following the same pattern with his mislabeled Job Development Credit, President Nixon is, I suspect, acting out of a principled, conservative commitment to trickle-down economics. That explains his massive federal subsidy for modernization at a time when 25 percent of industrial capacity is idle, a policy which might be accurately called a Job-development Credit.

In 1967, the Council of Economic Advisors provided one of the few official intimations of this situation that I have encountered. In the new setting of governmentally maintained stability, the Council said, "profit margins not only should be lower in the boom phase . . . but should be reduced on the average because *operations in such an environment carry less risk.*" I would generalize that insight. Since economic growth more and more depends, both quantitatively and qualitatively, upon the democratic power of the people, i.e., upon the intervention of "their" government (or, more precisely, of the government that should, by rights, be theirs), federal policy must be more and more directed to insuring a social distribution of the socially generated national product. The alternative to such an approach is not humble submission to the dictates of the free market. It is the radical redistributionism of those conservatives who want to put the economic power of all the people in the service of the wealthy few.

Given this framework, I can now proceed to my specific suggestions.

Since President Nixon abandoned his Old Economic Policy in 1971 and accepted the principle of the "full-employment budget" ("By spending as if we were *at* full employment, we will help to *bring about* full employment"), there has been an apparent consensus in this area. And yet, there is still a fundamental difference between the democratic Left and the sophisticated Right on this issue. Republicans are somewhat shamefaced about deficits and wary of public outlays (which they regard, quite wrongly, as "socialistic") and therefore instinctively seek to unbalance the budget by tax cuts, investment credits, accelerated depreciation and the like. As Seymour Harris remarked of President Eisenhower's tax cut, "An Administration wedded to anti-spending policies may accept a tax cut even though this is contrary to its deficit theories; but never a rise of public spending." That applies roughly to Mr. Nixon at this very moment.

Moreover, the individual and the corporate rich have invested millions of—tax deductible—dollars into drilling, and sometimes dynamiting, loopholes into the Internal Revenue Code. The great mass of people do not employ a small army of accountants and lawyers to look after their interest in the course of the legislative process. Therefore there is an institutional bias in the tax system in favor of deficits achieved by further maldistributing the wealth of the nation. It is correctable, but only through the most concerted and effective political action. For that reason among others I think it in-



finitely preferable that full employment policy be powered by planned public investments rather than by tax cuts.

Finally the government's intervention also bears massively upon how the federally generated wealth is distributed. As Leon Keyserling analyzed the percentage gain of various income groups through the 1964 personal tax cut, people with incomes of $3,000 benefited at a rate of 2.0 percent, those with $5,000, 1.6 percent, $7,500 at 2.1 percent, $10,000 at 2.3 percent, $25,000 at 3.8 percent, $50,000 at 6.2 percent, $100,000 at 8.3 percent, and $200,000 at 16.0 percent. And this same pattern of governmentally determined maldistribution is even more pronounced in the various policies stemming from Mr. Nixon's August 15, 1971 change of game plans.

In short, the pre-tax income of the United States is not a market-determined given (it never was, but I will leave that historical point aside). Its quantity and distribution and the very character of the Gross National Product are increasingly the result of government intervention. Public policy must therefore change to keep pace with economic reality.

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But it is obvious that the tax system, which is perhaps the fastest instrumentality for affecting aggregate demand, cannot be shunted aside in the fight for full employment. Therefore when it is used for this purpose, tax cuts (or increases) must be designed to favor those at the bottom of the economic pile (and be accompanied by a "negative" tax payment to those people who are out of the system altogether). This is an obvious application of the principle which is almost as universally ignored as it is universally accepted in this country: that taxation should be related to ability to pay. It is also in keeping with the premises of neo-classic economics since it is clear that the marginal utility of a dollar is much greater for a starving man than for a rich man.

This is not to say, as the Joint Committee's staff study implies, that a redistributionist approach oriented to the majority rather than, as now, toward the minority can only be justified on extra-economic, "ethical" grounds. (Thus the staff study remarks: "Even if the distribution of income is considered right to begin with—and many would cite ethical considerations to the contrary . . .") When that is said in the United States it usually means that the "ethical" policy is tender-minded, unproductive and fit for Sundays but not for working days. In fact there is a greater *economic* stimulus which comes from social investment in mass consumption since the majority desperately need to utilize 100 percent of the sum spent upon them while a corporation might well decide not to take advantage of the Job Development Credit. And secondly, by concentrating on the needs of the poor and working people the government can help create a much better socially balanced national product than we have now. Indeed, I suspect one of the causes of the turbulence of the last half of the '60s was that Washington subsidized, not only the wrong people, but consequently the wrong production as well.

The need to abolish all tax subsidies follows from this analysis, since they are a prime means of skewing the nation's priorities. The Joint Committee's estimate of the cost of these subsidies—$38 billion—is, as Senator Proxmire remarked, based upon a "relatively conservative definition." It computes the loss from the capital gains provisions at $7 billion whereas the Pechman-Okner estimate, derived from more recent data, puts that windfall at $14 billion. It does not take into account the imputed rent of owner-occupied dwellings although it is noted that the cost of this provision may be $4 billion. And it does not give any estimate for the tax cost of the Defense Budget (which includes other massive subsidies in the form of below-market rates for the use of the more than $13 billion in plant equipment owned by the Department of Defense, non-competitive prices, cost over-runs, and the other forms of semi-nationalized largesse which are showered upon private profiteers in this area). The Pechman-Okner estimate of $166 billion in subsidies through the various deviations from the economic definition of income in the Internal Revenue Code is thus quite plausible. That sum describes a federal budget for the rich almost equal to the official federal budget for the entire nation.

Some of the witnesses before the Joint Committee shied away from the idea of treating capital gains as ordinary income. I do not. One of the many reasons for my attitude is that the stock market plays a declining role in the process of actually raising capital, most of which comes from retained earnings, borrowings, depreciation reserves and, according to Murray Weindenbaum's testimony, government-subsidized credit. Indeed, much of what takes place on Wall Street has all the redeeming social importance of a crap game. When, for instance, money was quite tight in 1969, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that the industry was concerned because investors were actually coming to the stock market for money. It quoted a partner in Solomon Brothers and Hutlzer: "Every time you add $1 billion to the volume through new stock openings, you take out $1 billion that could be used to push up stocks already on the market." It is ridiculous to suggest that it is *economically* functional for the nation to subsidize such a process.

Secondly, it should be emphasized that the abolition of a subsidy does not mean that the government should be unconcerned and inactive in the area in which it applies. It does mean that tax subsidies are not the best way to proceed and/or that the tax subsidies are channeling funds to the wrong people, i.e., to the rich rather than the poor. Take housing as a case in point. The Joint Committee staff found tax expenditures of $2.6 billion through the provision for the deductability of interest on owner-occupied homes, and $2.8 billion through the deductibility of property taxes. It did not take into account, as I noted earlier, the imputed rent of owner-occupied housing, which could account for another $4 billion subsidy. These monies go exclusively to homeowners, i.e., they exclude the overwhelming majority of the poor and a good part of the working people. And they are, as witnesses before the Committee have conclusively demonstrated, given out in inverse ratio to need so that the rich get the most and the low-income homeowner the least.

Therefore the point of abolishing these subsidies is not to get the federal government out of the housing field, but only to put an end to what the late Charles Abrams called "socialism for the rich, free enterprise for the poor." Indeed, I believe that Washington should commit itself to a massive housing program with an initial commitment to building ten new cities of one million people each and ten new towns of one hundred thousand people (this was the proposal of the National Committee on Urban Growth Policy and it was endorsed by, among others, Vice President Spiro Agnew). One major source of funds for such an effort would be the more than $10 billion ($8.425 billion in tax subsidies, credit subsidies

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and cash outlays, and $4 billion in tax revenues from imputed rent which the Staff Study did not include) a year, which could then be put to social use.

In this regard I find it ironic that I am somewhat more optimistic about capitalism than the former Secretary of the Treasury, John Connally. Mr. Connally, a most enthusiastic free entrepreneur, has made the ultra-Leftist argument that if these various, and intolerable, subsidies were removed, the Dow average would plummet down to 500. As a socialist who thoroughly believes that this is indeed a contradictory and crisis-prone system, I cannot agree that with Mr. Connally it is so utterly, even pathetically, dependent upon such federal handouts. American business could prosper if there were a gigantic housing market which included the poor and the working people. It does not require—though it has an inherent tendency to prefer—an anti-social allocation of resources in this sector brought about primarily by the intervention of the government.

Thirdly, I believe that we should consider ending all taxes except the federal income tax (with the reforms I have suggested).

It is clear that state taxes on consumption are regressive and so are local property taxes (particularly when one adds in the impact they have upon renters). It is also clear that various federal taxes other than the income tax—social security taxes, for instance—are often regressive. Therefore on grounds of progressivity—and of efficiency since Internal Revenue usually gets high marks in that area—there is a very strong *prima facie* case for making the federal government the sole collection agency for all public funds in the United States. A formula could be devised according to which a fixed—or under some circumstances, a rising—percentage of this revenue would be returned to local government.

I think this question is quite involved, which is why I make this proposal tentatively, as a call for study rather than as a program for action. For instance, putting and end to the Balkanization of local government is an urgent necessity in America. We need metropolitan government and regional government, and state and city lines are often economically irrelevant to the fundamental tasks before the people. I would therefore want to tie such an ambitious revenue-sharing scheme into a series of incentives which would put a premium on metropolitan and regional innovation. I would also like to see such a reform as part of a commitment to a genuine national guaranteed annual income (and a guaranteed right to work). But my main point is, I think, obvious enough: that it should be a goal of public policy to put an end to all of the regressive tax systems in America.

In conclusion, let me return to my opening theme. In the old classical theory the justification of the maldistribution of wealth was that, although ethically unfair in the abstract, it provided incentives to talented individuals who then increased the national wealth in such a way as to benefit all citizens. That was never true, but I will not go into my reasons for thinking so here since it is not relevant to this particular analysis. Today, whatever the case was in the past, the source of wealth is increasingly not individual talent but man socialized by his technology and now, even in America, man socialized through his political institutions. In the process, government has become the most important single determinant of the distribution of wealth, before taxes as well as after.

Under these circumstances one can incorporate the old, elitist priorities into the increasingly socialized system. That is what President Nixon has done with his tax policies, which have enormously favored the corporations, and his wage and price controls. In that approach, democratic government becomes the instrumentality of minority interests more even than in the days when legislatures and legislators were bought and sold in this country. It is this philosophy which, for instance, led the *Wall Street Journal* to ask the Price Commission to allow the companies to better their position *vis à vis* the workers. ("The Key to Business Confidence," February 9, 1972)

On the other hand, we could adjust political institutions to make them adequate to the new economic reality. If that were done, our basic philosophy of tax reform would not be redistributionism as against the free market, but a democratic and social distribution of the wealth induced by governmental action as against our present system of undemocratically and anti-socially distributing that wealth. The tax system has been, and is, an agency of anti-social priorities. It should be turned upside down.

WILTED JOCKS

THE STAGE

Joseph Papp's most recent export to Broadway, *The Championship Season,* exhibits once again the vitality of the New York Shakespeare Festival. It proves as well that the Public Theater has many mansions, for Jason Miller's play is a conventional, one-set, realistic drama that—except for the bluntness of the language—might have been written in the 1920s. It is a celebration play, one that brings together a group of people for a joyful occasion which turns into a bout of revelation. One day, I suppose, a clever playwright, with a fondness for old forms and new ideas, will gather a company of obvious losers—perhaps at a funeral—and slowly uncover the news that they are all healthy and happy. Miller is not that playwright; he goes the conventional route and shows the emptiness, loss, pain beneath the veneer of assurance and amiability.

Miller's occasion is a reunion. Four of the five members of a Catholic high-school basketball team—Penn-

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sylvania all-state champions, 1952—come to the house of their old coach, as they do every year, to drink, to reminisce, to attempt to recreate the exaltation of that championship season. This time, however, it does not work. The coach, who presumably has cancer, has already suffered the surrogate death of forced retirement, and his "boys" are about to lose the political and economic power they have in the small mining city which they think of as theirs. They turn on one another and, in the course of three acts, we discover that the strip-mine operator, the richest of them, is so bored that he uses sex like a drug and has a suicidal attraction to fast cars; the insurance-salesman mayor has become a smiling mask with no sense of self inside; the junior high school principal with political ambitions has come to accept himself as the mediocrity he sees reflected in his son's eyes. The fourth, an avowed alcoholic, presides over the revelations, needling, mocking, feeding the guilt and envy that keep the quarrels alive. At the end, when the coach finally, limpingly brings them back together—in tears— they are less a championship team than five desperate men trying to stay afloat with only a leaky memory to hang onto.

American playwrights have always been fond of the decayed athlete as symbolic figure. Clifford Odets' Ben Gordon, Arthur Miller's Biff Loman, Tennessee Williams' Brick Pollitt—all have taught us that there is nothing sustaining in the early celebrity of a star athlete, that the American success dream is as suspect as its products. Miller's aging basketball players say all that again. The coach, quoting Teddy Roosevelt, insists that they never take less than success. Miller goes a step beyond the success-to-failure slide that the other playwrights use with a third-act revelation that explains the absence of the fifth member of the fabulous team. Pushed by the coach, that boy, the best player of the lot, purposely injured a member of the opposing team and, later, eaten by regret, tried to get the coach to refuse the trophy. The old platitudes take on a new, a real form: it isn't how you play the game, it's whether you win or lose. The coach, who is demanding that the "boys" love one another at the end of the play, has insisted earlier that you have to hate to win. Success is a definition of we-versus-them in which the foulest act is justified in the name of victory.

In *The Championship Season,* the social, the political implications of this attitude are made explicit. The team is the all-American platoon with some noticeable absences. The "boys"—Irish, Italian, Polish—represent middle-America in one of its less attractive guises. Although they cut one another up on ethnic grounds, they come together in their racism and anti-Semitism and in their need to hang onto their town, a need that dresses greed and weakness in the rhetoric of old-fashioned American virtue. I distrust the play a little, for it seems to offer a false comfort to its presumably liberal audience, to assure them that they can safely cry over these five men because they are no danger to anyone. They seem as safely dead as the coach's heroes—Father Coughlin, Joseph McCarthy—and the alcoholic, in a moment of sardonic pathos, compares them to the whooping crane. I suspect, however, that the forces that this group represents still win as often as they lose.

Whatever my suspicion of the ideas that hover behind the characters, the play itself is well done. Jason Miller's ear for the funny-sad language of this kind of man, this kind of town is extremely good. The play does have some of the faults of its genre: the over-tricky first-act curtain, the easy symbolism of a man's puking into the silver cup, a tendency toward over-extension. It is this last which is the work's gravest weakness; the play goes on revealing long after we know all there is to know. The repetition would be unbearable, I think, if it were not that the play is so well cast, perfect physical types who are also actors of remarkable subtlety. Even so, I found myself indifferent to the five characters, unable to care for them as individuals or to fear them as types; as a result, the best I could do was work up a bored respect for the production. *(At the Booth)*

GERALD WEALES

LAUGHING IT UP

THE SCREEN

Woody Allen's *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex (But Were Afraid to Ask)* begins with a series of close-ups of rabbits—dozens of rabbits, all white photographed on a white background. In some of the extreme close-ups (with the help of a little special-effect work), the rabbits seem to become just disembodied pink noses and ears. They take on an almost opalescent property. There's something about the richness of the color and clarity of the light in these shots that distracts us from the triteness of the joke being made. In fact, in every skit in this film, and in Allen's treatment of sex generally, there is something untoward being concealed by the production values. They are the production values of a director-producer who would pay for the rights to a best-seller just so he can use its title, even though his script has nothing to do with the book and could as well have been called something else.

Allen's script consists of seven situation-comedy routines under such titles as "Do Aphrodisiacs Work?" "What Are Sex Perverts?" and "What Happens During Ejaculation?" (For all I know, these titles really are from Reuben's book.) The humor runs to such things as a man who sleeps with a sheep, an Hassidic rabbi

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Aid to Third World Peoples?

According to Department of Defense statistics, the United States sold arms worth a total of $17.4 billion between fiscal 1962 and fiscal 1971. Inventories of U.S. arms transfers compiled by the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute indicate that the principal beneficiaries of this growing arms trade are the aerospace companies which produce the jet aircraft, helicopters and transport planes currently being sought by foreign armed forces. . . .

Increased U.S. weapons sales to the Third World is a major component of President Nixon's military policy. Under pressure from an aroused public and a war-weary Congress, the Administration has been obliged to withdraw American combat troops from Asia and to reduce the rate of defense-spending at home. In order to protect American interests abroad from the threat of armed liberation movements, Nixon has forced our client regimes in the Third World to purchase substantial quantities of U.S. arms and to supply mercenaries for U.S.-led counterinsurgency operations. . . .

Pentagon spokesmen frequently assert that the U.S. arms sales effort is not intended to foster a weapons race in the Third World. We are not "arming small nations so that they can attack one another," Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul C. Warnke told Congress in 1968. Nevertheless, the cumulative impact of U.S. sales programs has been to quicken the pace of militarization in underdeveloped areas and to help fuel an upwardly spiraling "'balance of terror" in certain key areas that threatens to precipitate a major world war. . . .

Even if war does not come, the growing sales of arms to underdeveloped nations will divert scarce resources from desperately needed development projects and further perpetuate the depressed status of Third World peoples. . . .

"Salesman of Death"—Michael T. Klare
COMMONWEAL, September 8, 1972

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who has a girl whip him and a gigantic breast squirting a gardenhose stream of milk. In most of these skits, Allen makes some acceptable social convention into a metaphor or vehicle for some unacceptable sexual practice. The quiz show "What's My Line?"—as innocuous a form of entertainment as there is—becomes "What's My Perversion?" A man's attempt to make his girl friend becomes a co-ordinated effort between a brain that functions like a NASA Mission Control Center and a sperm who is a reluctant paratrooper.

Despite Allen's knack for realizing his ideas on the screen, less than everything in *Everything* strikes me as funny. The failure is similar to that of *Portnoy's Complaint*. Some ideas that may be funny as concepts are just too gross to work as sight gags. It seems that Allen's material only works well cinematically when we are made more aware of the metaphor than the sexual subject. In the paratrooper routine or the skit about a frigid wife in which Allen burlesques Fellini movies, the strength of the metaphor makes the gag at least workable, if not funny. But the man in bed with a sheep and the blimp-sized breast never get beyond being merely repulsive visual images.

And Now for Something Completely Different, a new comedy from England, should seem completely familiar to anyone who's seen Woody Allen's film. The six-man group that wrote and enact this film—Graham Chapman, John Cleese, Terry Gilliam, Eric Idle, Terry Jones and Michael Palin—were the creators of the BBC's "Monty Python's Flying Circus," a British counterpart to "Laugh-In." What we have in their film is an anthology of their BBC routines. (In fact, I'm not sure whether this film isn't just the original TV films spliced together, which might explain why it doesn't have the pristine technical quality that Allen's film has.) Some of *And Now's* routines could have been used almost as-is in Allen's film. There's the one about the traveler's phrase book in which every day requests in Hungarian have been mistranslated into indecent propositions in English. And where the TV quiz show in *Everything* is "What's My Perversion?" in *And Now*, with a slightly different, audience-participation format, the game is called *Blackmail*. But essentially the game, and the gag, is the same.

Since these English chaps aren't so hung up on sex as Allen is, their variety show has more variety in it. But as gag writers their hang-ups are still similar to Allen's. One of the skits in *And Now* is about the world's deadliest joke, which killed the gag writer who thought it up and ultimately became the Allies' secret weapon against Germany. I suspect that this routine is every comic's wish-fulfillment in a couple of ways. Seriously now, folks, aren't gag writers just like the rest of us? What they really want is power over their fellow men: they want a talent not just to amuse, but to terrorize—to affect life and death, to decide global wars.

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At the very least gag writers would like to die laughing themselves; and one can sense in the background of this skit on the deadliest joke the kind of conference where Chapman, Cleese, Gilliam, etc. sat around trading ideas and concepts for "Monty Python." I wouldn't be surprised if Woody Allen has such gag conferences with himself, sitting alone at a conference table to suggest new routines he's thought up, and then leaping into another chair to respond to his own idea. Monty Python's madcaps run into just the problem that hinders Allen's film. Routines that must have seemed hilarious in the telling at a gag conference take too long to be executed comically on the screen and turn out a bit unsightly.

Another current comedy which had hoped to be something completely different, and isn't, is Robert Downey's *Greaser's Palace*. Since the film seems to have sprung exclusively from the incoherent fantasies in Downey's head, maybe lack of originality is even more remarkable in it than originality would have been. At any rate, it has a perfect *doppelgänger* in Alexander Jadorowsky's *El Topo*, which was seen in this country earlier this year. Both films are westerns set in the desert, both are picaresque allegories that make no sense on the literal level, and both are graphically violent. In a world where *Greaser's Palace* was a great parody, *El Topo* might be the masterpiece Downey's film was a parody of.

But both of these films are too solipsistic to share one world, or one anything else. It's inconceivable that Downey could have taken enough notice of some other director's work to copy it so closely. The similarity of the two films *has to be* an accident. Perhaps their similarity proves the eighteenth-century notion that God made all of us like synchronized clocks—completely out of touch with each other, yet in perfect parallel. Then again, the likeness of the films may be more akin to a single discovery made independently by two different research scientists. That happens all the time, in science. A third possibility is that the two films just go to show that, as probability theory has been telling us for years, if you set enough monkeys typing in a room, eventually they'll turn out the same body of literature by chance. A lot of movies that I've seen lately suggest the same thing to me.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

BOOKS

THE DIMENSIONS OF DUPRE

LANGDON GILKEY

THIS IS a very full book, rich in learning and wisdom, a veritable storehouse of views of religion from an exceedingly wide variety of sources brought together by a thoroughly-read, open and sensitive mind. The subject of the book is, as the introduction states, what faith is to religious man. It is, therefore, a description of the faith of "religious man," a delineation of its fundamental structure or anatomy with regard to almost all its aspects and implications, and a defense of the integrity and authenticity of religious faith against both contemporary misrepresentations from outside and traditional distortions from inside. Professor Dupré states that he will conduct this investigation of faith as a philosopher rather than as a theologian. While the theologian writes from *within* commitment to his own faith, the philosopher reflects on faith from the outside without prior commitments (p. 7-8); and this is a legitimate and important task for philosophy since religion is an undeniable and large part of ordinary experience. This reflective enterprise is what Dupré sets out to accomplish, and he does it very well; whether or not his thought here remains, according to this definition, philosophical or unwittingly (and to our view rightly) slips ever and again into theology, is a question we shall ask later.

The Other Dimension
LOUIS DUPRE
Doubleday, $10.

Perhaps Dupré's most persistent theme is that faith as found in religious man is a dialectical relation to the transcendent, dialectical in two senses: (1) As a relation to transcendence it pushes, so to speak, beyond itself, negating its own prior forms since it reaches for a unity of all experience beyond conception and even beyond direct experiencing (the totality it intends is never experienced as a whole). Thus faith is always on the move in history: its forms of experience are symbolic and relative because its intended object is transcendent; and while it necessarily drives ever towards verbalization, clarification and understanding, it never achieves full comprehension or complete intellectual expression. As transcendent the object of faith is never *possessed* as an object but only intended, and it is therefore 'known' only in the religious act of belief and trust rather than in the intellectual act of knowing. (2) Faith is dialectical also because while it is responsive to an experience of the transcendent, it also expresses a sense of alienation, confusion and disorder in, and so dissatisfaction with, the present state of things. In turn this duality of experience drives

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towards a synthesis or total unity within or despite brokenness and plurality—again a synthesis that is believed and trusted but not to be intellectually achieved and delineated. Whether or not this account of the faith of religious man is a fair description of all the wide variety of religious attitudes, it is surely a most clarifying and helpful delineation of what most of us today regard as a normative Christian form of faith.

On the basis of this description it is evident why Dupré insists that in matters of religion philosophy can only describe faith; it cannot take its place. For him philosophy has no independent and autonomous grasp of the object of religion, the transcendent; it can neither prove nor describe God; and when it seeks to so do, it distorts the intended object of religious faith. Thus it has no *normative* role in religious discussion, as if it knew God and his works on its own; it can only describe what religious faith is and on that basis offer its criticisms of religion and its thought. The limit of its capacity vis-à-vis the object of faith is to establish by a description of human existence that man is in relation to a transcendent or ultimate horizon; but to name that horizon God is reserved for religion alone.

If this dialectical relation to a religiously intended transcendent reality is for Dupré the essential skeleton of the faith of religious man, the substance of the book is a very thorough and scholarly "fleshing out" of this into a full portrait—faith so defined in all its aspects and implications. There follow, therefore, chapters on religious experience and its essential characteristics, on non-religious interpretations of religion and their shortcomings, on the meaning and use of symbols and rites in religion, the nature of religious language, and the religious use and transcendence of myth—the latter a most interesting if not quite "jelled" chapter. On each of these subjects Dupré exhibits an astonishing familiarity with the entire relevant literature: psychological, anthropological, philosophical and religious. And he provides one of the best surveys of the whole range of viewpoints on man's religion and its "aspects" (at least religion as it has appeared in the West) that I know. On each subject Dupré does not attempt to argue empirically, historically, or philosophically with divergent viewpoints and interpretations. True to his initial standpoint, he establishes his own view of the topic in question, or resolution of the debated issue, by appealing to the criterion of the attitudes and intentions of "religious man," "what the religious consciousness intends" or "will recognize" as characteristic of its faith. For, as we noted, it is the sole role of philosophy to describe faith "as it finds faith to be."

After this survey of what might be called "aspects" of faith (symbols, rites, religious language, etc.), the remaining half of the book is given over to what could be called "implications" of faith. That is, here we are no longer investigating the human experiences and usages in "religion"; now we are concerned with the transcendent object of faith itself, the terminus of the intentionality of faith, the divine *noema* and not the religious *noesis*. Thus Dupré now deals with such subjects as revelation, the name (or essential nature) of God, *creatio ex nihilo* and evil, religious alienation and sin, salvation, and the mystical experience. Again he presents us with a wide variety of viewpoints, and achieves an intelligible and creative synthesis or position of his own by means of the same criterion: what religious man intends in his faith. The problems of this discussion with regard to his stated method we shall take up in a moment. Suffice it now merely to say that here we are dealing largely with *theological* materials, traditional and contemporary, and discussing what to a theologian seem to be *his* problems. Thus, somewhat ironically, we find arising out of what most of us would regard as theological affirmations, a potentially very creative theological position yet one set within an ostensibly purely philosophical series of reflections.

As we have implied, the assets of this book are numerous; two especially I would highlight. First, as we noted, Dupré's learning is immense, and thus he provides a full and varied discussion of each topic he takes up. His own dependence on Hegel is evident throughout, modified in the direction of the autonomy of religion and of faith by many of the perspectives of contemporary theology both Catholic and Protestant. Secondly, his own viewpoint, as it emerges steadily out of these discussions, exihibits, to my mind, a very liberal and creative stance—one quite at odds both philosophically and theologically with traditional Catholic positions. Revelation for him is neither propositional, nor does it provide "factual information" about this world or the next. Rather it is originally event, and thus is its truth "a new interpretation of man's place in the universe." Consequently all its essential but derivative verbal expressions (i.e., witness, doctrines and dogmas) are *symbolic* renderings of that essential self-understanding in relation to the transcendent (cf. e.g. his interpretation of the "fall," p. 406). Correspondingly, there are no objective miracles interrupting the causal order; rather miracle is an event constituted as revelatory by the religious mind, an event that is "interlocked in a context with finite causes on *both* sides."

Especially with regard to his discussion of God, I found Dupré bold and creative. In direct challenge to traditional Catholic theism, he argues that Being, while a valid and primary aspect of the divine as we experience it, is only *one* of the names, all of which are "relative" and symbolic, for God and that this category must be qualified with aspects of negativity in the divine so that real relations with the finite, dynamic change in the divine itself, and a self-limitation of the divine omnipotence be possible. In agreement with process thought he argues all this on the ground that only if God be thus related, changing and self-limited—as well as the source *ex nihilo* of our being, with which process thought would *not* agree—can the reality of

LANGDON GILKEY *teaches at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago.*

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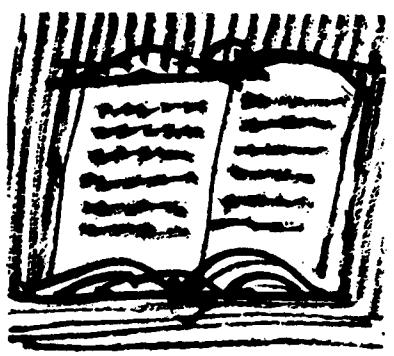
the finite as itself changing, contingent and free be asserted. Thus he even goes so far as to say that real finite contingency and freedom imply that the possible in the future is even for God undecided and so only possible and not yet actual. Finally, he repeatedly disputes the traditional distinction and separation between the levels of nature and of grace. The religious relation to the transcendent, he states, opens up the depth of man's natural being, it does not reveal another realm; and the love resulting therefrom represents the fulfillment of man's natural loves and not their replacement. Thus Dupré has presented us here with a thoroughly modern and ecumenical theological viewpoint, namely one which, although based on the transcendent, yet potently seeks to express the reality, autonomy, integrity, value and possibility of redemption of the finite, the contingent and the historical.

* * *

My own problems with this work are twofold, one having to do with method and the other with substance. As we noted, Dupré sees this work as philosophical and not theological, as an objective reflection on faith from the outside rather than a committed statement of faith from within it. And yet this seems hardly at all to be what he is actually doing. One suspects this when so much of the book concerns the issues dominating contemporary theology, and especially when he presents his own viewpoints—and argues for them—on these theological issues. It becomes even clearer when one becomes aware of his working criterion: what faith, or "the religious consciousness," intends or accepts. Is not the use of this criterion (what faith believes or intends) in order to establish *his own* intellectual judgments of validity —as he does throughout—for the author in effect to step within the circle of faith? Is not this criterion itself, so used, an expression of a commitment to the stance of faith? Dupré regards as *true* what faith—as he defines it—affirms and believes.

Is this, then, not to write from within the circle of faith, not from outside it? And, finally, on the terms of his own definitions, the transcendent object of faith's intentionality is neither available to philosophical speculation nor possessed as an experienceable *noema* by faith; it is "known," he says, only religiously, *in* the act of faith. As a consequence, it is hard to see how philosophy for Dupré could on *any* grounds—its own speculative capacities *or* in reflecting on religious faith as its object—speak of that transcendent object, and so of revelation, God, salvation and so on—which Dupré



repeatedly and creatively seeks here to do. One can only conclude that on his own terms he is in fact here not at all doing philosophy but theology, and doing it by means of a method long held in esteem by many Protestants (Schleiermacher, Aulen and Brunner—to mention only a few—though *they* called it "theology!"), namely to elucidate the elements of Christian belief by means of an analysis of "the Christian religious consciousness," "the stance of faith," or "the implications of the Christian encounter with God."

It seems to this skeptic that only the traditional—and possibly still politically wise—Catholic distinction between philosophy and theology explains his insistence that in none of this is his enterprise that of theology. But that antique distinction can hardly justify this method since Dupré's whole modern understanding of philosophy and of theology, and of their capacities and interrelations, has (as he well knows) itself made meaningless that classical distinction. (I often feel that on the basis of this anachronistic distinction—and its promise of (false?) security—half the brains in Catholic theology label themselves philosophers and thus never get into the really crucial ring). To do theology thus 'surreptitiously' and 'under the table' by calling itself philosophy may in truth allow one to put forth a more liberal viewpoint than would a direct assault. But it suffers in its own realization because it must omit essential Biblical and traditional sources, and it cannot, for example, deal directly with such central doctrines (central to revelation, God and salvation, which *were* here discussed) as Christology, atonement, ecclesiology and eschatology. And besides, what on earth for Professor Dupré does "theology" have left to concern itself with if his book is exclusively philosophy?

While we are on this point, the problem of the criterion of "the religious consciousness," "what the religious man recognizes as true," or "as acceptable," should be raised. Who *is* this religious man, and where do we find him? From a *philosophical* point of view, as here defined, surely he cannot be merely Jewish or Christian "religious man." Recognizing this, Dupré tries manfully to discuss other kinds of religious consciousness than the Judeo-Christian. But as he modestly admits, he cannot cover *all* these sources and thus must confine himself largely to the Judeo-Christian ones. In effect, therefore, these other traditions neither ground nor validate his fundamental notions, or in any substantial sense help to shape his final view of "religious man" and his "faith." Thus "faith to religious man" turns out in all his discussions actually to be faith to modern Christian man. In so far as the resultant definitions are thus restrictive rather than universal in character, and more ideal and normative than empirical in source and function, it is again hard to see how this criterion is a *philosophical* as opposed to a *theological criterion*. Theologically it is hard enough to justify an explication of the anatomy of the "Christian religious consciousness" or of "Christian faith." But as a theological method this enterprise has some legitimacy,

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for at least there the enterprise is openly and in principle restricted to Christian materials, the Biblical and traditional materials necessary to an adequate delineation are dealt with, and the relevant warrants provided. Few members of quite other religious traditions would recognize Dupré's total viewpoint as representative of their own "faith" or "religious consciousness." They would probably not object if what they thus rejected were labeled "Christian theology"; but they well might if it were stated to be a "philosophical description of the faith of religious man."

Finally, I found it surprising that at the end of the book mysticism, again in its Christian forms, was clearly affirmed to represent the highest level of religious existence: "religious experience in its purest form." Now it is surely legitimate in a mystical theology to argue on any number of theological grounds that mysticism is the highest form of Christian life—though I probably would not agree with those arguments! But when an objective philosophical description of "the faith of religious man"—and in effect of Christian man—states as an objective judgment that religion, and so the Christian religion, finds it apogee in mysticism, there is surely something amiss here. Such a *descriptive* judgment is impossible because there are too many forms of Christian piety (not to mention other religions) which to an unbiased mind must be given their own Christian authenticity and yet which are consciously unmystical or even anti-mystical in character. One thinks at once of classical Lutheran and Calvinist piety, of SK, of Ritschlian liberalism, of neo-orthodoxy, of contemporary futuristic eschatology, to mention only a few. To regard these as "lower" forms of faith is surely to make a normative judgment—in fact the same sort of "theological" judgment that defined faith here as "Christian" rather than, say, as Hindu. Such a judgment in theology is, as we noted, possible and defensible—but how can it be made on the grounds of the *philosophical* and descriptive method stated at the outset? And besides, this classical and so otherworldly mysticism, finding the finite transcending itself as finite in an identity with God (cf. pp. 507-545), seems to me in strange contradiction to the other major theological theme of the book, namely the affirmation of the reality, integrity, autonomy and value of the creature as creature. The mystical life as portrayed here is a genuine "Christian way"—of that there can be no doubt. But surely it cannot objectively be said—and would Dupré really wish to say it?—that it represents *the* highest way, the culmination (it seems to me the ultimate denial) of that worldly and historical religious faith portrayed throughout the preceding pages.

In conclusion let me repeat that this is a full, rich book—full with scholarship, balance and insight. I only hope that the creative theology latent here —covered over with the frequently inappropriate mantle of philosophy— will in some other, freer context be allowed to express itself as *theology*— for that would really help us all.

The Politics of Riot Commissions, 1917-1970

ANTHONY M. PLATT, ed.

Collier Books, $3.95

Cities Under Siege: An Anatomy of the Ghetto Riots, 1964-1968

DAVID BOESEL & PETER H. ROSSI, eds.

Basic Books, $12.50

MICHAEL WALLACE

The past fifty years have seen a remarkable turnaround in white America's attitude toward its black minority. The road from wholesale lynching bees to Lyndon Johnson's announcement that "We shall overcome" is a mighty long one. Yet accompanying this liberalization in race relations has been an enormous and puzzling increase in black protest. culminating in massive riots during the mid-sixties. During the peak fighting in Vietnam, it seemed the United States was fighting a two-front war: in Asian jungles, and in American cities. In hundreds of metropolises, soldiers and policemen fought black citizens amidst burnt-out buildings. Two recent books considering the interplay between new American attitudes and violent urban outbreaks help us make some sense of this paradox.

Anthony N. Platt of the School of Criminology at Berkeley looks at how official America has responded to urban violence. In the *Politics of Riot Commissions* he excerpts useful bits from official inquiries, some recent like the McCone, Kerner, and Scranton analyses, others dating back to post-World War I conflicts, like the East St. Louis (1917), Chicago (1919), and Detroit (1943) affairs. Most excerpts are then paired with critical essays (all but one previously published) that serve as truth squads to puncture and deflate the official histories. It is something of a non-book—really a pastiche of available materials—the kind one compiles quickly, then gives coherence and depth by an introductory essay. Unfortunately Platt's pedestrian piece adds little to current thinking. He takes profiles of commissions, finding them composed of elite representatives of powerful groups; notes that they work hastily, have superficial conceptions of the nature of power, consider the riots to be senseless, useless, the products of frustration or instigation, and do their best to consider only what protestors (and not the police) do, as violent.

They disparage the political and rational grievances underlying the riots and assure all that the elites can handle the situations. With a misplaced air of exposé he announces that "riot commissions are inherently conservative, protective of existing institutions and not disposed to propose radical changes which will diminish the power of established groups." Well sure. No startling news here. Flabby generalizations are sometimes given muscle in the often perceptive individual analyses. Arthur Waskow's report on the Chicago Commission on Race Relations (1919) and Andrew Kopkind's shrewd look at the Kerner Commission (1968) lay bare the

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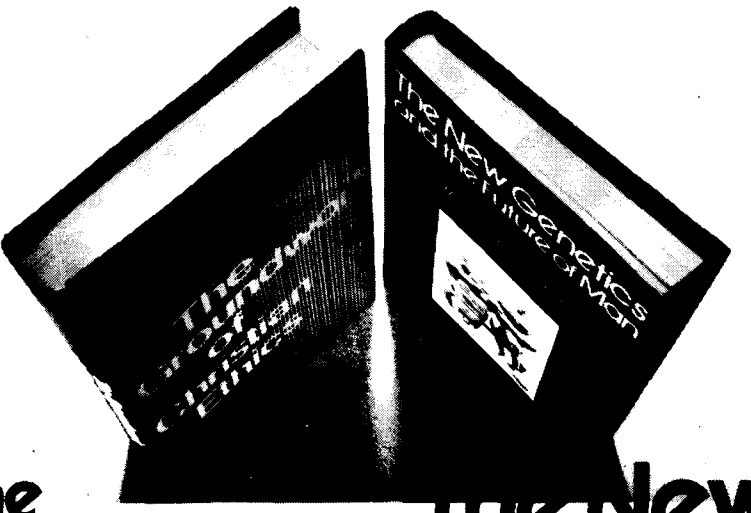
intricate connections between the Commissioners and the halls of power. Elliott Curie skewers the Violence Commission (1969), catching it in various definitional smears. Still a lot of interesting questions are left unmasked.

Platt homogenizes the groups, and ignores, downplays, or fails to exploit instructive differences. Not all the commissions agreed on the causes of riots. McCone found the blacks criminal riff-raff, a handful of misfits who struck out senselessly; Kerner spoke of the social and environmental backdrop, including white racism, and then called the riots large-scale community protests against bad conditions. Nor are all commissions of one mind on the illegitimacy of violence. A 1915 Commission on Industrial Relations found that "violence is a natural form of protest against injustice," while the Scranton Commission (1970) shrilly anathematized it.

Most intriguing, among and within commissions, liberals battled conservatives over what to do about riots. One side argued cogently and coherently for the law and order, club-em-down approach. Commissioners who favored the Mayor Daley/Bull Connor approach, like "Tex" Thornton, the Kerner Commission heavy, stressed the need for respect for the law, backed up by federal troops on standby basis if need be. The liberals waffled. Certainly violence was intolerable, official "force" required, and in the late sixties some hair-raising counter-insurgency plans emerged from liberal commissions, dressed in latest military chic. But liberals, from considerations of decency and shrewdness, repeatedly rejected repression. The Violence Commission denounced "excessive use of force" as an "unwise tactic." The commissions, dating back to the World War I bodies, followed their liberal members in calling, almost without exception, for further "professionalization" of the police: they were to be reigned in, toned down. The liberal solution was not to club-em-down, but to buy-em-off. The Violence Commission called for "a judicious combination of reform and control." "Reform" to the

ETHICS... GENETICS and the Christian



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by N.H.G. ROBINSON

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"The book is remarkable for the wide range of ethical thinkers discussed, and for the fairness and sanity of its judgments."
—The Expository Times

336 pages. Cloth, $7.95

The New Genetics and the Future of Man

MICHAEL HAMILTON, Editor

Although the influence of the scientist on our lives is staggering, we are increasingly unable to influence him or, indeed, even to comprehend his work. This fascinating and sometimes frightening book reveals the grave risks of assigning to scientists, by default, decisions on cloning, test-tube babies and gene manipulation.

In *The New Genetics and the Future of Man,* scientists, lawyers, theologians and philosophers engage in a spirited, probing interchange. Throughout, the discussion is marked by a deeply Christian sensitivity to the complex ethical questions involved.

Saturday Review recently observed,

"All segments of society should be involved in the debate these new technologies demand. The techniques must be discussed and debated among lawyers, doctors, theologians, legislators, scientists, journalists, and all other segments of society. The issues raised require inter-disciplinary attention. We cannot begin too soon to consider them."

256 pages. Paper, $3.95
Cloth, $6.95

WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO.
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dominant liberals was not a change in power relations—the elites were to be left in control—but a reallocation of resources: more welfare, more job opportunities (though from where was seldom clear), less discrimination. Sticks out, carrots in. Over the years, the liberals consistently bested the conservatives. Here is a significant indicator of the power structure's thinking that demands further analysis. It is not dealt with by Platt's superficial survey; it assumes great significance within the theoretical framework of David Boesel's and Peter H. Rossi's *Cities Under Siege*.

This book, like Platt's is a convenient collection of pieces, most, again, previously published. Some are worth seeing again, like Nathan Caplan's study of the New Ghetto Man; others were best left unexhumed. It is not quite the non-book that Platt's is, for two reasons. First its apparent historical genesis gives it body. Boesel and three of the contributors worked for the Kerner Commission and composed an analysis of the riots—"The Harvest of American Racism"—that was rejected as ideologically unsound; this book may be seen as a collective rebuttal to Kerner. But the basic coherence of *Cities Under Siege* flows from its excellent introductory essay by the editors and two earlier pieces, one by each editor, here republished. With a strong launching, many of the pieces become footnotes (or objections) to their counter-Kerner interpretation.

Boesel and Rossi set the ghetto revolts in a much larger pattern of post-Second World War black protest, and tie that pattern to changes in the nature of modern American capitalism. They suggest that black protest, South as well as North, followed upon the erosion of old-style repression and the unworkability of the new. Modern corporate capitalism, or at least its progressive wing, no longer needed the Jim Crow formalized structure of white supremacist practices to keep blacks in line. Indeed they found it irrelevant, even counterproductive. Violence in the streets disrupted a delicately complex economy. Gears shifted first in the economic arena in the 1930's—unions were bargained with rather than shot down. Manipulation replaced downward force. A civil rights coalition, spurred by anti-fascist Second World War ideology, grew up, and triumphed piecemeal over the old guard. Brown v. Board of Education (1954) marked a major victory of the new policy and, as we may now see, the Riot Commission became its later official codification. Upon this graphic sign of a split in the elite, Boesel and Rossi argue, a civil rights movement, led by newly urbanized, middle-class blacks, sprang up in the South. King and his colleagues tackled Jim Crow. Their struggle was disciplined (the consequence of a clearly defined accessible enemy) and non-violent (the legacy of fear and continued segregationist brutality). The old guard resisted but, with the backing of federal troops and the unhappy support of progressive businessmen, increasingly distressed with the impact of disorder on profits, and concerned lest northern corporations shy away from an unruly South, the civil rights people achieved a temporary triumph.

In the North, the same processes shaped a different story. Mechanization and growth undercut the old need for low-wage, unskilled labor, and eroded the old desire to keep the working class split along racial lines. Blacks were left marooned in an "underclass" of menials, intermittently and poorly paid, penned into a ghetto (by whom Boesel and Rossi are never quite clear), patrolled by police, kept quiescent and dependent by welfare measures. The liberal solution broke down, however, because military spending cut into the elites' policy at the required levels. The price for order grew, because the blacks, herded together, freed from earlier fear or direct white violence, developed new consciousness and militancy; they demanded more than liberals could deliver. Black youth, scornful of accommodationist leaders, began to clash with their police keepers; these clashes eventually escalated into riots. Unlike Southern protest, these outbursts were undisciplined (too many people involved, the enemy too diffuse, demands too hard to generate) and violent (the old fear was gone). They were not ideological—such ideology as emerged came later, with the Black Power movement, and then the Panthers. They were, rather, mostly wildcat strikes by the underclass against oppression and exploitation.

It is an intriguing and I suspect largely correct thesis. Liberalization—the ending of democratic violence—had an unanticipated consequence; it fostered black resistance. The theory, like any good theory, invites quarrels. I have some reservations about the use of the word "underclass," as perhaps an avoidance of the whole knotty problem of blacks as class or racial group. The role of Vietnam is not explored and it too raises knotty problems: did it not improve, rather than worsen, economic conditions in the ghettos? For that matter did not the level of welfare benefits skyrocket in the sixties? Nevertheless the theory generates fascinating questions about where we go from here.

Boesel and Rossi conclude by warning of the great recuperative powers of liberalism. The elites might manage to reorder priorities, cut back overseas losses, and launch a new New Deal; the blacks, better managed, would remain a "subject population at odds with the society that generated them." Certainly Nixon seems to be moving in this direction, deftly mixing his Moynihans and Mitchells, plumping for a guaranteed annual wage, pushing black capitalism to divide the ghetto on class lines, building bridges to China and throttling back on Vietnam. (The recent commissions are eloquent in their dismay at the war.) But can the liberal solution *ever* work, or do blacks provide the American system with an impossible contradiction? Some might argue that corporate capitalism has a stake in the ghetto (as the currently fashionable colonial analogy suggests); that just as Europe thrived on the slave trade, and American industry, grubstaked by slave labor, flourished on colonial profit-taking, so it still requires a black "underclass" to make the system go. Perhaps, but the corporations have abandoned the ghetto market to small

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merchants, and do not appear to much need black labor. The system might require a permanent proletariat as a surplus population (to keep wages down), but it needn't be black.

The success of the liberal solution then depends not so much upon will (though continued black unrest will certainly be required to prevent liberal relapses), but on the possibility of a way. Problem one is the white working and middle classes: can the elite drag them into reform postures? Boesel and Rossi seem to assume that American racism has been something manipulated by the elite, and can thus perhaps be shut off at will. But are working class bigots really puppets deluded by false consciousness or do they have their own stake in the perpetuation of the ghetto? Then, too, it is the Archie Bunkers who are being asked to foot the bill for welfare capitalism; how long will they go along with that? Secondly, corporate capitalism is under overseas attack, not just from rebellious colonies, but from European and Japanese competition. With a dollar crisis and a wage freeze, the new elites may simply not be able to afford a buy-em-off policy. Should that prove the case, then the wheel may finally turn full circle, and the club-em-down school triumph in the end. Tex Thornton counseled fellow commissioners not to suggest that social conditions "explained" the riots, saying "if we voice poverty, etc., as a cause of riots, 30 million poor people will use it as an excuse to riot. We've got to be realistic." In 1969 he was overruled. Perhaps, if Boesel and Rossi are correct about the consequences of liberalization, the next riot commission may prove to be horrifyingly realistic.

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REVIEWERS

MICHAEL WALLACE is a doctoral candidate in the Department of History at Columbia University.

DORIS GRUMBACH, author and essayist, teaches English at the College of St. Rose in Albany, N.Y.

RUTH PRIGOZY is an assistant professor of English at Hofstra University on Long Island.

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DORIS GRUMBACH

This is a slight, provocative and, I find myself thinking without too much to back my view, wrong-headed book. Certainly I should have unquestioningly accepted the truth of its thesis, for on the day I received the book a Hungarian chap, believing himself to be Christ, took a hammer to the Pièta. The nuns, at whose convent he had resided, reported in disbelief: "He seemed a very good man. He went to Mass every day."

The point of these short pages is simply stated: religion is like any commodity in modern society. If the consumer "buys" it, it can both harm and, to a far lesser extent, benefit him. Religion, to psychiatrist Chesen, is both a disease or a palliative: the great weight of his argument, and most of his evidence is on the side of the pathology.

Using a number of "typical" case histories for evidence, all taken from his own practice, Dr. Chesen attacks what religion does, not what it is. And, to his way of thinking, what it does is almost always harmful. True, he sees value in prayer—it relieves anxiety and is a good substitute for worrying—and he acknowledges that religion is often a "prophylaxis against suicide," as well as a possible adjunct to mental therapeutics. It can, in addition, make the approach of death more bearable. It has a practical value: church membership makes it easier to move from city to city—"a portable cultural milieu" is what the Arizona doctor calls it.

But the hazards far outweigh the benefits. Much of the book is a chamber of horrors about what terrible mental states either result from the practice of religion or are inculcated early and never escaped from as a result of premature religious teaching. The excesses —Jesus cults and pentecostalism—are especially threatening to mental stability, but Catholicism is not far behind. It fastens an "inflexible way of thinking" on its practitioners, so that "logic and consideration are often replaced by dogmatic or reflexive testimonials." When dogmatic mind-fix is challenged "by the extrinsic actuality of life," (this, most often, here means sexual reality) the Catholic is likely to end on Dr. Chesen's couch.

Christianity in general, however, has a rough time in these pages. The case of Angela who led a strict Methodist existence until she exploded into a-social behavior, leads Dr. Chesen to two interesting axioms:

The first: "Profound lifelong religious indoctrination may assume the form of a punitive conscience in the adult. This serves to stifle the person's conscious recognition of normal drives; he is therefore unable to deal with them in times of stress."

And second: "Religious dictates during youth can place people later in irreversible, unresolvable dilem-

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mas, leading to permanent unhappiness."

I am too weak in psychoanalytic theory to argue these axioms on the basis of the evidence offered here which seems, to my uninstructed mind, to be scant and insufficient. But I am enough of a logician to realize that these statements are truly "undemonstrated propositions," not, in the more common sense of the word axiom, "self-evident, universally recognized truths." If they are therefore acceptable in the logical sense, one is tempted to trot out all the examples of persons one has known to demonstrate their opposite, to cite those who have utilized "profound lifelong religious indoctrination" and "religious dictates during youth" to lead them, not to the psychiatrist's couch or the mental hospital, but into extraordinary social actions, in all areas of poverty, peace, political dissent, and racial justice. One thinks of where Ivan Illich's profound religious convictions took him, or Bonhoeffer, or the brothers Berrigan, or the couple Melville, or the lifelong Catholic Chavez, and a myriad of others. I purposely omit names like Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, Edith Stein, because they were, after all, converts, and therefore ineligible to be witnesses for "profound lifelong religious indoctrination," but only of a somewhat shorter religious influence.

What I am questioning here are the verbs in these axioms—"may" and "can." It is equally possible, indeed easy, to prove that other conclusions to religious etiology may or can *or do* result, to show that almost anything may or can result from the same cause, including political liberalism and bigotry, social conservatism and radicalism, mental strength or instability, given the right set of influences or chances. In the same way, it can be shown that suicide "may" result from misguided psychiatric treatment (as well as misguided religiosity): cf., James Wechsler's recent tragic account of his son's death, *In A Darkness*. I am not entirely serious with this counter-thrust, of course. This, like Dr. Chesen's, is a clearly undemonstrable thesis, and that is what makes his conclusions, like mine, so dangerous. There are no uncontrovertible "facts" here, there may be some truth lurking in them. Most likely there may only be a little, and much truth to the contrary.

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All My Friends Are Going to Be Strangers

LARRY McMURTRY

Simon & Schuster, $7.50

RUTH PRIGOZY

The short, unhappy life of Danny Deck, hero of Larry McMurtry's ingratiating novel, was briefly sketched in the closing pages of the sprawling *Moving On*. Danny comes on stage here without a preexistence; whether as novelist, sometime termite-exterminator or graduate student, his life held no surprises until he met Sally and it began "to veer crazily one way and then another, like a car being driven by W. C. Fields." He marries Sally, one of the unforgettable bitches of recent fictional memory, and is propelled on a lonely odyssey, searching for his own identity in a misty borderland of the American Southwest—"that thin little strip beween the country of the normal and the country of the strange." In his wanderings, Danny encounters an assortment of characters familiar to readers of on-the-road novels of the last two decades: stoned hippies, mindlessly brutal Southern law officers, a sexually frustrated clubwoman, an over-sexed English literature professor, a crass Hollywood mogul, an up-tight, middle-aged couple defending the American family. But McMurtry takes the standard ingredients of an overworked genre and transforms them into his own fresh and funny commentary on the literature of rebellion.

All My Friends Are Going To Be Strangers marks the end of the road: for the sensitive young seeker trying to establish his authenticity in a hopelessly antipathetic world, there is simply no place to go. Marriage, sex, success, art, literature, Hollywood, food, the city, the commune, the farm—even the great open plains of Texas over which some God seems to tower—cannot stop Danny Deck's inexorable drift toward failure and dissolution. From Texas to California and back again, Danny meets experience head-on, with a romantic readiness that gradually erodes in succession of hapless adventures. He feels himself slipping away from his own center: "Parts of me were drifting," he confesses. Liquor, sex, drugs, brief, desperate contacts with others, only draw him further into a dazed acceptance of futility. Caught up in the sexual revolution, Danny finds that all meaning does not reside in Sally's body. Wallowing in the dark with Emma Horton—in many ways his female counterpart—Danny realizes they are "straining for something more than could be gotten from two bodies." What a marvelous epitaph to all the clinical sex fiction of the sixties is Danny's wondering observation: "All the screwing should have made some fundamental difference. It shouldn't have left things just the same." With Jill, the screen artist whom he loves, Danny's despair only deepens. Sexual satisfaction may not be all, but without it, the frustration is immitigable. McMurtry also delivers the coup de grace to obscenity, the verbal analog of anti-bourgeois rage, in a brilliantly comic scene at the hospital where Danny hurls a barrage of sexual expletives at Sally's outraged parents.

Movement—discarding possessions and pushing on—intensifies Danny's loneliness and sense of separateness. Like the caressing camera of *Easy Rider*, McMurtry's eye moves with Danny over the hazy pink-and-orange

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tinted landscape of the Southwest, stopping to celebrate the warm sexuality of Houston. But Texas has its Rangers whose brutal assault mocks Danny's proud identification with his home state. He had really believed that in Texas no one had the right to push him around.

Pop culture, the adulation of indigenous trash that hit America after the last war, fills Danny's life. McMurtry knows and loves American artifacts: Dr. Pepper, "B" movies on television, packaged supermarket cakes, chiliburgers and roadside stands. Refreshingly free of arty posturings against the products of technological revolution, McMurtry understands that to survive whole in America, one must immerse himself in the destructive element—in this case, trash—and transcend it. To absorb it is fatal. As the English professor, Godwin, complains, "We pump it all into our own personal lives." Graduate school is merely high-level trash and titles of critical exegeses are the pop standards of the large technological-literary sub-culture that McMurtry bared in *Moving On*.

Brooding over the whole book are memories of the past, and in Texas, of the great Mexican hero, Zapata. But the past lives only in old Uncle Laredo and his wife, Martha, who had conquered life by butchering animals and despoiling the land. Meanness and parsimony are the true legacies of American history. McMurtry himself has brooded, over his legacy from earlier American writers: haunting echoes of Hemingway (remember Frederic Henry's dismissal of Wilsonian rhetoric in *A Farewell to Arms*?)—here, "I was tired of words like dignity, concepts like pride"; of West's Hollywood grotesques and Fitzgerald's crazy Sundays; of Steinbeck's celebration of Mexican primitives and simple prostitutes.

Unlike the panting ladies-magazine prose of *Moving On* (particularly the sex scenes), the language here is crisp, lean and forceful. The best of it is visually suggestive, without the flat, prosy lapses of *The Last Picture Show*. McMurtry's unerring eye for pictorial detail captures brief, gem-like flashes of contemporary life. Perhaps that is why the moving automobile plays such an important part in his work; dramatic possibilities always lurk in his passing landscapes.

There are flaws in the novel: although thoroughly engaging, Danny is too strung out from the beginning to offer much resistance to circumstance; his end is foretold in his beginning. There is no dramatic center; like Danny's life which is "no life," the plot is no plot, "just a long confused drive." However vivid and exciting are the bizarre characters, the "normal" people seem lifeless. The novel as a whole lacks the intellectual resonance of its Saul Bellow counterpart, *Augie March*, and there is little suggestion of Mr. Sammler's complex inner life in any of McMurtry's characters. Although he catches just about the whole contemporary scene McMurtry doesn't seem to know what to do with his discoveries. The ending works because he writes so well, but it is somewhat artificial; superimposing nineteenth-century heroic individualsm on a played-out twentieth-century anti-hero is forcing absurdity.

But enough. This is a novel of high comedy, rich pathos and what is rare, genuine charm. Now that Mr. McMurtry has given us the last picture show and what should be the last on-the-road novel, I am eagerly waiting to see how this immensely talented writer will move on.

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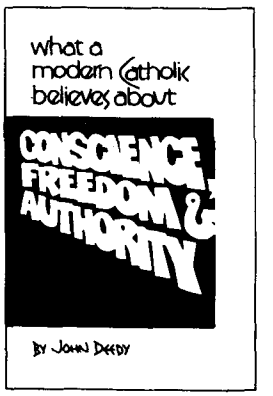

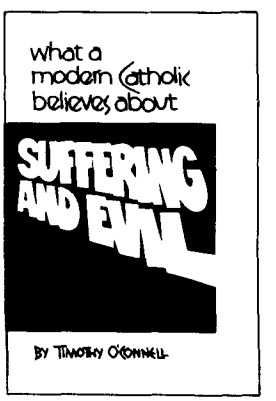

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